



Christiana Obeyesumner Urbanist Questionnaire 2023 Seattle City Council, District 5

What is your preferred Comprehensive Plan housing growth alternative and why?

As a candidate that prioritizes intersectionality in my approach to housing, I prefer Alternative 6 especially because of its reliance on a racially-inclusive approach to anti-displacement and zoning, as well as its progressive goals towards increasing access to affordable housing. I support a more proactive and direct approach to solving the housing crisis, which Alternative 6 provides. It advocates expanding multifamily zoning, environmentally-friendly developments, and preserving tree cover. The city is continuing to grow, which means that we need alternatives that will push for increased housing affordability and density to prevent displacement and inequitable housing solutions.

What investments do we need to make to achieve our housing affordability goals, and what should those goals be? Do you support the Housing Levy? *

Housing is a human right, not a privilege, and I believe that the city must prioritize investing in affordable housing programs, and incentivizing developers to create more affordable housing projects. I also believe that we need to invest in inclusionary zoning, and increase housing density to where more units are built per given area. I definitely support the Housing Levy and advocate for its expansion.

Under what circumstances would you support pedestrianizing streets that are currently open to cars? *

I support pedestrianizing streets, but more importantly I support the expansion and creation of complete streets throughout District 5, and the rest of Seattle. Creating



more complete streets means having the infrastructural framework to support pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and everyone who would need to use the street. It means putting medical clinics, transit centers, grocery stores, and other necessities, to make streets more accessible and safe to all. I would work with the Reimagining Aurora Coalition to match the needs of the community and ensure that Aurora and other main streets are complete and safe to everyone. In this development, I would advocate for addressing infrastructure issues such as drainage, and making sure that any new developments are compliant with the Green New Deal.

What is your approach to generating progressive revenue for the city?*

I support a progressive income tax and a progressive carbon tax where the tax increases with every subsequent violation. I also strongly advocate for an excessive earnings excise tax and wage equity audits, to generate more income for the city and increase workers' wages. Employers would have a choice to raise the wages of their employees to decrease the income disparity or they would be required to pay the tax. Another stream of income can be a vacancy tax – modeled after the one in Vancouver – where developers would be taxed a certain percentage of their vacant property's value if they refuse to rent it out at an affordable rate or cede it to the Social Housing PDA.

What is your position on impact fees?*

I support them to an extent due to the revenue they bring in. However, I believe that at times they cause fear because people assume that they will disincentivize housing development projects. There needs to be more mindfulness in how the impact fees are implemented and ensuring that there is an intersectional conversation to enforce them without causing unintended consequences.



What items do you view as essential to the next Seattle transportation levy due in 2024? *

As the candidate for District 5, I believe in the importance of fixing the annexation code that is happening to my district, which is shifting responsibility from the city and resulting in a lack of transportation resources for people in my district. I also wanted to reiterate the dire need for complete streets in our city, and will push for its development in the next Seattle transportation level. I view the expansion of our bus and light rail system especially in underprivileged communities as essential as well.

Would you vote to approve completing the streetcar network via the Center City extension and work with the mayor to prioritize funding and building it?*

Yes.

Under what circumstances are homeless encampment removals appropriate?*

Homeless encampment removals are never appropriate unless people are being transitioned into semi-permanent to permanent housing, and there is a pipeline where people can access other social services. Movement needs to be consensual and respectful to the agency of houseless individuals and their belongings.

Hiring incentives haven't worked so far to attract additional police officers to the Seattle Police Department. How can the City promote public safety in such an environment?*

Public safety can be promoted by implementing preventative measures such as affordable housing and access to rehabilitative resources. Increasing behavioral health funds, and redirecting surplus funds from SPD into community programs is essential. I always advocate for targeting the root causes of issues to truly solve



them, and the issue of public safety is one that requires the city addressing multiple issues and ensuring that people's basic needs are being met. Investing in affordable housing, accessible mental health resources, job training programs, and community-based violence prevention programs are all different methods to promote public safety.

What is the appropriate role for the Seattle Police Department to play in creating public safety in Seattle? What would a police contract that encourages safety look like? What does the next police contract need to have in order to earn your vote of approval?*

The police department has expressed before that they feel as though they are working outside of their scope and having to deal with situations for which they are not properly trained. Thus, I believe that SPD's role should be solely dedicated to resolving any situation that includes an immediate threat to life, and that any other situation be handled by social workers, mental health workers, and other specialists depending on the situation. We need to create new departments and reallocate police budgets to them with appropriate training and staff to resolve situations that threaten community safety. The next police contract needs to redefine what is and is not outside of police officers' scope, and have accountability measures like a consent decree. It would also need to cede power and oversight to community programs and other specialized departments as well as reallocate portions of their budget to those programs and resolving non life-threatening emergencies.

How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?*

By making transit more accessible and reliable to riders, especially to those with disabilities. Prioritizing investing and expanding transit in underprivileged communities and ensuring that there is affordable and accessible transit for all is also essential to encourage people to ride transit. I also support promoting

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development projects that are located near transit centers and extending the hours of transit operation. Creating a smoother, faster transit system is important to allow people to get to their destinations in a timely manner without too many delays and interruptions. This would restore faith in the transit system and will ensure that more people rely on it as a means of transportation.